

CO-CHAIR

EDWARD

WANG

2010

VICE-CHAIR

KAREN

LAURIE

FISCHER

DOPKINS

2009

2011

SANDRA

BAKALAR

2011

DAVID HEIST 2011

MARC JONES 2009

THOMAS KEAVENEY
RITA MCNALLY 2010

KAY O'HALLORAN 2010
DONNELLE O'NEAL 2010

LARRY ONIE 2011

AGNES ROGERS 2011

ENID SHAPIRO 2009

LENA WONG 2010

HERBERT GOODWIN 2009

ASSOCIATE MEM

DR. DOREEN WILKINSON 2011

ASSOCIATE MEM

DR. PAULA SCHNEIDER 2010

ASSOCIATE MEM

SCHOOL LIASON
THE COUNTRY CLUB LIASON

BARBARA
SAMUEL

SCOTTO
BATCHELDER

Mission

The Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission is Brookline's official town agency working in the areas of intergroup relations, civil rights and youth advocacy. The Commission seeks to develop opportunities within Brookline for those who are discriminated against, eliminating barriers to their choice of jobs, education and housing; to increase communication to destroy stereotypes, halt polarization, end distrust and hostility, and create common ground for efforts toward public order and social justice; to increase the capacity of public and private institutions to respond to the problems of the disadvantaged so as to augment their power to deal with problems that affect their lives.

Contact Email for Human Relations/Youth Resources

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Related Web Pages

- [Human Relations Department](#)

Created by Town Meeting in 1970, the Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission is Brookline's official agency working in the areas of intergroup relations, civil rights and youth advocacy.

Membership

Agnes Rogers, beloved senior member of the Commission as well as housing activist and advocate for the elderly, was honored by the Brookline Senior Center at a fund-raising gala on October 28.

Administration

The Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission full-time staff consisted of Director C. Stephen Bressler. Long-time Commission secretary Ongelita Mockabee Miles was moved to the Health Department. During 2009, the Commission bid goodbye to member Jacob Effron, who left to attend Yale University, and Captain John O'Leary, who received a new assignment within the Police Department, as well as School Committee liaison Glenn Cunha. The Commission welcomed new full member Dr. Laurie Dopkins and new associate member Dr. Doreen

Wilkinson, as well as new School Committee liaison Barbara Scotto. Captain Tom Keaveney, new commander of the Community Relations Division, began attending Commission meetings in anticipation of his being appointed to the Commission. Marc Jones stepped down as Commission co-chair. Dr. Ed Wang continued as Chair of the Commission and Karen Fischer was elected as Vice Chair.

In addition to his work in inter-group relations and assisting residents of the town in addressing a variety of personal and societal problems, the Director is Brookline's Affirmative Action Officer, Fair Housing Officer, Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, Ombudsman for CATV and staffs the Broadband Monitoring Committee, is a member of the CATV Coordinating Committee, the Home Heating Task Force, the ADA Transition Team, and Brookline Holocaust Memorial Committee and serves as a member of the Town's Emergency Management Team.

Community Relations

Commission Chair Dr. Ed Wang noted that the monthly meetings of the Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission offer opportunities for other groups to inform the Commission of what they are doing, what actions they may be undertaking, and how the Commission may be of assistance.

Police/Community Relations

Commission Chair Dr. Ed Wang continued to serve on the Citizen Complaint Review Committee (CCRC), which had been created by the Board of Selectmen to review and revise the previous process created in 1987. The expectation was that the revisions would make the process of complaints both more efficient and more fair. The Board of Selectmen accepted the CCRC's final report on July 28, 2009, which included the following with regard to the participation of the Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission, listed under Section VI of the report, page 29:

L. Public Education

That the Board of Selectmen work with the Brookline Police Community Service Division and the Human Relations/Youth Resources Commission to create a plan, subject to periodic review, for educating the public about the complaint process, including on the Town Website.

Comment: The goal of the plan shall be to increase dialogue between Brookline citizens and the police department to foster an understanding on the part of citizens of the role and the responsibilities of the police department and an appreciation on the part of the police of citizen's concerns and complaints for the purpose of increasing cooperative and supportive efforts between citizens of Brookline and the police department.

(This recommendation is proposed to add a new section to Section 34 of the Police Manual. The Selectmen should also extend this education program beyond the Police Department.)

On February 18 the Commission met with Police Chief Daniel O'Leary to discuss Police Department Racial/Gender Breakdown of Police/Community Interactions 2008 Year End Report and Brookline Police 2008 Part A Crimes, where he spoke about specific occurrences in the town, plans for new hiring, the Citizen Complaint Review Committee, cameras along the public way, publicizing crimes on www.crimereports.com, and a Northeastern University research project on racial/ethnic identification of drivers.

Martin Rosenthal and Frank Farlow, co-chairs of Brookline PAX, addressed the Commission at its May meeting in support of a Resolution Concerning Citizen Complaint Policy to be discussed at the upcoming annual town meeting.

Chief O'Leary returned for a formal presentation on October 21 to discuss 2009 Mid-Year Crime Report and Race/Gender Interactions. He updated the Commission on police department hiring, answered questions regarding gay and lesbian police officers, touched on recommended changes in the citizen complaint process, gave an update on the situation of cameras along the public way – including an incident that was solved, in large part, because of the presence of the cameras. There was also discussion about a Sudbury resident with connections to neighboring city Newton who was allegedly connected to jihadi activity.

In addition to Chief O'Leary's two appearances before the Commission, Commission member Captain John O'Leary, commander of the community services division of the police department, and his successor Captain Tom Keaveney, commented frequently at meetings on matters of police/community relations in the town.

Human Relations Youth Awards

With much appreciated financial assistance from the Brookline Rotary Club, the Commission, under the leadership of Marc Jones, sponsored its 23rd annual Human Relations Youth Awards on June 9.

Two Human Relations Leadership Awards, nine certificates of merit, and one letter of achievement were presented to youths in recognition of their volunteer efforts over the past year. Following a reception in the Health Building for students, their families and friends, the awards were given out at the evening session of the Board of Selectmen, which was cablecast live by Brookline Access Television.

Home Heating Task Force

The Director continued to serve as a member of the Home Heating Task Force, which was charged to find ways to assist residents who might be faced with exorbitantly high heating bills. The Director produced and hosted a local access television program on heating issues "Home Heating: What You Need to Know" in cooperation with Brookline Access Television that featured Sgt. Michael Raskin of the Brookline Police Department, Dai Nguyen of the Brookline Health Department, and Joe Hingston of the Brookline Fire Department. The program covered health codes and responding to complaints, the role of the police in responding to complaints as well as how the town may respond in an emergency, and suggestions from the Fire Department on how to avoid heating-related fires.

Fair Housing

On November 19 the Director attended a regional Fair Housing Workshop in Medford featuring a presentation by the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership.

On December 7 a preliminary meeting was held with Commission staff and members as well as Brookline and Newton planning departments staff to plan a joint Brookline-Newton Fair Housing program for 2010.

Brookline Public Schools

Brookline School Committee members Glenn Cunha and Barbara Scotto served as liaisons to the Commission providing a conduit for monthly interaction with the Brookline Public Schools.

Diversity

In January the Commission met with Commissioner Martin Ebel of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination for an update as to the workings of that state agency.

Commission members Rita McNally, Jacob Effron and Dr. Paula Schneider continued work on the Faces of Brookline project, the goal of which is to illustrate the diversity of town residents.

In March the Commission met with the Town's Human Resources Director Sandra DeBow to discuss Affirmative Action and the new ways in which the Town recruits, especially utilizing social networks such as LinkedIn and Craig's List. She talked about how civil service may actually impede the Affirmative Action hiring process. She noted that she hoped that the Commission would be in a position to assist her department as it revised the Town's Affirmative Action and Americans with Disabilities Act policies.

The May meeting featured Amy Albert, Conciliation Specialist, U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service, who spoke about her agency as well as the importance of

municipal human relations commissions.

Oleg Yemelyanov, Partnership Specialist with the U.S. Census Bureau appeared before the Commission at its November meeting to discuss the 2010 Census and concerns about hard to count populations, including some immigrants as well as certain racial and ethnic minorities, and the homeless. Subsequently, the Director met with Mr. Yemelyanov to review community resources, to assist with community outreach, and to arrange for a census questionnaire assistance center in the town.

Hidden Brookline

In cooperation with the Brookline Historical Society the Hidden Brookline Committee was represented by Dr. Emilie Dawes Steele at the April 20 Patriot's Day celebration. Dr. Steele is a descendant of William Dawes, who, with Paul Revere, rode to towns outside of Boston alerting people that the British were coming.

On Memorial Day, May 25, Dr. Barbara Brown spoke about slavery at the Old Burying Ground ceremony convened by the Brookline Veterans' Services Department.

During 2009 Dr. Brown conducted walking tours for 4th graders and teachers of important African-American sites in the town.

The Hidden Brookline Committee chaired by resident and former Commission associate member Dr. Barbara Brown, and including Commission Vice Chair Karen Fischer and member Rita McNally, and with several members of the public being active including Brookline High School teacher Malcolm Cawthorne, former Commission member Reverend George Chapman, Dr. Lloyd Gellineau, town meeting member Mark Gray, Marilyn Hershfield, and Dr. Emilie Steele, worked together with the Cemetery Trustees and Parks and Open Spaces Department to plan a recognition of the presence of slaves in the Old Burying Ground.

On September 13 an engraving in the wall at the Old Burying Ground was unveiled before a gathering of over 300 persons. The emotional and historic event featured comments by Dr. Barbara Brown and master of ceremonies Malcolm Cawthorne as well as guest speaker State Representative Byron Rushing. Also speaking were Chair of the Board of Selectmen Nancy Daly, and Chair of the Cemetery Trustees Abbe Cohen. Brookline High School students Gigi Owens and Amodhi Weeresinghe led the gathering in song. Refreshments were donated by Aramark of Fenway Park through the assistance of Vice Chair Karen Fischer. The program was recorded by Brookline Access Television.

Domestic Violence

The Director plays a significant role in helping to combat domestic violence in the town. He staffs the Brookline Domestic Violence Roundtable and is producer for the Roundtable's Brookline Access Television show The Safety Net hosted by Ronny Sydney, now in its 14th season, which may also be seen on-line at www.batv.org . He is also a member of the Jennifer Lynch Committee Against Domestic Violence.

On January 22 the Director spoke about the Roundtable at a regional meeting of CHNA 18 in Needham. CHNA 18 is a coalition of public, non-profit, and private sector organizations in Brookline, Dedham, Dover, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Wellesley, Weston, Westwood working together to build healthier communities through community-based prevention planning and health promotion.

On October 14 the Domestic Violence Roundtable presented Robin Lane, former rock star with the group Robin Lane and the Chartbusters and founder of the support group for women who have encountered trauma A Woman's Voice, at a packed program at Hunneman Hall at the Main Library.

Commission Meetings

During 2009, the Commission held nine staff-assisted regular monthly meetings. In addition to committee reports and items mentioned above, other topics covered at Commission meetings included:

January – police report on crèche vandalized at St. Mary’s Church; update on Faces of Brookline project; a youth diversity training program by the Sugihara Initiative at Congregation Temple Emeth.

February – support of the Act to Restore Enforcement of Civil Rights

March – discussion on cost of off street parking and impact on lower income residents

April – report on MCAD legislative breakfast at the State House; process for police department discipline and selectmen’s review

May – Commission involvement with the Brookline Public Schools Equity Project; comments on how the police are dealing with graffiti, loud parties; hate crimes

June – civil rights concerns should the Swine Flu turn virulent; report on housing needs assessment meeting; report on work of Hidden Brookline Committee; comments on viewing of Traces of the Trade at a meeting of the Massachusetts Association of HRCs

September – Commission viewed Traces of the Trade and discussed having a program around the film in 2010

October – preliminary discussion about 2010 U. S. Census; discussion about Intercambio, a group based in Colorado that works with immigrants and trains volunteers who work with immigrants

November – initial plans for 2009 Youth Awards

Regional Programming

The Director participated in meetings of the Norfolk County District Attorney's Anti-Crime Council and at meetings of the Massachusetts Association of Human Relations/Human Rights Commissions, where he also served as vice-chair/secretary.

Publications

In 2009 the Commission revised its popular Child Care Resource Guide produced in cooperation with the Brookline Early Childhood Advisory Council. The Guide was available

on-line at http://www.brooklinema.gov/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=910

The Commission continued to distribute its brochure We're Here For You!

Publicity

Commission activities were covered by the Brookline Tab, Boston Globe, WBZ-TV, and NECN.